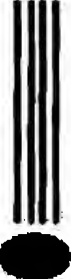


الأوروبي لثقافة الآخر ضمن الخطاب الاستعماري المبني على علاقات السيطرة والقوة. تبرز هذه النظريات على أن النصوص التي تعالج العلاقات الثقافية تعكس علاقات سيطرة، علماً بأن هذا الأوروبي (المرأة) يحتل حيز الآخر في مجتمعه أو كما يبين ميشيل فوكو أن النص يصبح غالباً شبكة قوى متصادمة. وبالرغم من ذلك فإن هذه النصوص تُنشئ حيزاً في التاريخ للشعوب المحتلة يدعوه الباحث هومي بابا بالحيز الثالث، وهذا ما تقوم بتحليله نظريات ما بعد الاحتلال. هذا الحيز الثالث ينطبق أيضاً على النساء الأوروبيات في المستعمرات حيث يصبح لديهن مساحة للمناورة و لبناء الذات الأنثوية المغيبة في أوروبا. سوف أوظف نظريات ما بعد الاحتلال مع النظريات الثقافية.



بناء هوية النساء البريطانيات في أدب النساء البريطانيات الرحالة إلى الشرق الوسط دراسة حالة

د/ هيفاء فريد^(*)

في هذا البحث سوف أدرس كتابات إحدى النساء البريطانيات الرحالة إلى الشرق في بداية القرن العشرين في عام ١٩٠٥. وهي جيرترود بل. لقد زارت سوريا للطبيعية و بلاد الرافدين و شبه الجزيرة العربية ودونت مشاهداتها عنهم جميعاً، ثم عانت إلى المنطقة ثانية حيث استقرت في بلاد الرافدين ولعبت دوراً سياسياً مهماً في إنجاح السياسة البريطانية وفي تأسيس العراق كأول دولة عربية. وكانت ما دونته في رحلاتها في غاية الأهمية لدعم الخطط البريطانية في المنطقة وتسهيلها.

سأناقش في هذا البحث قراءة أو ترجمة جيرترود بل الإثنوغرافية للثقافة السورية آنذاك من خلال ما كتبه أثناء رحلتها في كتابها: سورية الصحراء والمعصرة. سوف أحلل تجسيدها المغلوط لمفهوم الثقافة السورية في ضوء النظريات الحديثة لمفهوم الثقافة والزمان والمكان والحيز إضافة إلى الحقيقة والتجسيد والأصل والشفافية. هذه النظريات تثير إشكاليات حول المفهوم التقليدي "الكني" عن الثقافة وسوف أعالجه في ضوء فهم الفرد

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histories, empty lands and absent Bedouins were the premises on which she built the subjugation of this area.

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of the complexity of the world which makes the concept of "culture" delinquent. That is what James Clifford refers to as the "Predicament of Culture". This problematizes a lot of other concepts related to culture in its traditional holistic understanding like "origin", "representation", "truth", "transparency" and "natural". Bell must come through this hybridity at the moment she accepted her contact with the Other (the Syrian). The colony becomes a third space. This space gave her a lot of recognition unavailable at home, but she ignored that multiplicity by interpreting it from the perspective of the imperial ideology and Orientalism; for herself, it took the form of exaggerated form of Englishness and concentration on the idea of supposed national unity because it enabled her a certain upward mobility to share the male realm and to be always protected. For the Other, it is a call for the British to educate the native, enforcing its cultural, economic and political agenda.

Bell's travel narrative created a significant contribution to colonial governance, especially in the later phase of her work as a member of the colonial office in Basra and Baghdad, depending on personal and everyday encounters with the individuals in the city and in the desert gathering certain information to produce certain representation of the Arab life under the Ottoman rule which was a "lack" in all aspects for her. Imaginary

Her stand toward this multiplicity takes different interpretations. Sometimes it is positive when it is implicitly contrasted with the rules of her society and her bourgeois class, and sometimes it is considered negative because it does not reflect racial and political unity on the national level. Does not what she say about the Syrian society reflects the modern concept of the 'predicament of culture', which is characteristic of any society in the world, especially with the beginning of the era of modernity for the European which started in 1492, the discovery of America? The European man created the roots of decentering his Self and his holistic culture. Jacques Derrida argued in his article "Structure, Signs, and Play" in reference to ethnology which is close to the nature of travel narrative that:

Ethnology [was] born as a science only at the moment when a decentering had come about: at the moment when the European culture ... had been dislocated... and forced to stop considering itself as the culture of reference. This moment is not ... a moment of philosophical or scientific discourse. It is also a moment which is political, economic, technical and so forth."(282)

It is the moment when anthropology started with the European expansion and contact with the Other. It is culturally a recognition of hybridity, of multiple origins and

subjectivity for the Other no matter how limited but it leaves a trace:

As I sat drinking glasses of delicious Persian tea at [Sheik Hassan's] table, I greeted him in his tongue and whispered: " I have been much honored by the holy family at Acre."...and when I rose to go and asked his charge he replied: ' _for you there is never anything to pay.' I vow there is nothing that worms the heart as to find yourself admitted into the secret circle of Oriental beneficence- and few things so rare. (145)

She was sure that she would be accepted and welcomed in spite of her foreignness in an Oriental environment, using the factor of hospitality to reach what she aimed at and

In some respects it is even easier than Europe. You find in the East habits of intercourse less fettered by artificial chains, and a wider tolerance born of greater diversity. Society is divided by cast and sect and tribe into infinite number of groups, each one of which is following a law of its own[T]he European may pass... places, encountering little curiosity and of criticism even less... his practice and the ways of his thought are at variance with those among whom he finds himself.(ii)

Syria to Jerudi, the brigand on the road. Homi Bhabha argues in terms of stereotypical thinking that the European may have both contempt for the native as well as a desire to master them and to emulate them in a certain way. In many occasions she identified herself with the Orientals. She was overcome "with the sense of being as much an Asiatic as a European." However, is it a strategy to give her text authority and authenticity to show her understanding of the foreign culture? Clifford Geertz argues in *WORKS AND LIVES* that to authorize an ethnographic text it is necessary for the ethnographer to make the reader believe that he was not just "there", but that he has the ability to empathize with the native, to "actually penetrate another form of life." For him, this is very important point of the ethnographic writing. For Bell, this may not explain a true identification, it is still a step toward partial understanding of the Other. She mentioned that she wanted to meet with Orientals to know their "fine flavor of character" to feel "as intimate as if you have shared the same slice of bread and butter in your nursery." (189) On human level, it is not "impossible to be on terms of friendship with dwellers in [the Eastern] regions." After all "he is as we are". She is trying to find common ground on which she can communicate with him, and at the same time an attempt to live the exotic and her nostalgia to the East, creating a temporary space in her

infancy stage meant that the Arabs lack the “practical utility” of the West, the lack of reason which creates enlightened consciousness that is necessary to the development of cultures and the ability to govern. Both (culture and governing) do not exist for the Arabs because the “Society is divided by caste and sect and tribe into an infinite number of groups, each one of which is following a law of its own, and however fantastic, to our thinking, that law may be, to the Oriental it is an ample and satisfactory explanation of all peculiarities”. (II) The prevailing governing law is connected with gender differences: “A man may go about in public veiled up to the eyes, or clad if he please only in girdle: he will excite no remark ... he is merely obeying his own law.” And “For a woman this rule is of the first importance, since a woman can never disguise herself effectually. That she should be known to come of a great honoured stock, whose customs are inviolable, is her best claim to consideration.”(ii) Bell enjoys the Orient for being “less fettered by artificial chains” and has “a wider tolerance born of greater diversity.”(ii) These artificial chains characterize the bourgeois women of England, like Bell, who sometimes needed to give them up. This was very clear in the colonies.

Bell could deal with the Orientals as individuals, and she came to deal with people from different social stations, sects, positions and ethnicities, starting from the governor of

Bell tried to give the tribal hierarchy a racial stereotyping, a sign of the inferiority of the bedouin form of political governance. It is controlled by "blood feuds" and unjust practices engraved in the essential racial inferiority of its people:

...all over Syria and even in the desert, whenever a man is ground down by injustice or mastered by his own incompetence, he wishes that he were under the rule that has given wealth to Egypt, and our occupation of that country, which did so much at first to alienate from us the sympathies of Muhammadans, has proved the finest advertisement of English methods of government. (58)

Does it mean for Bell that the British people have the national homogeneity built on racially superior forms of governance and justice which differentiate them from the tribes of Syria and put them on the top of the human racial hierarchy? In her preface she tried to show the infancy and backwardness of Arab statecraft at a time when the Arab nationalism was emerging. She was saying that this reality is fated to collapse without the intervention of the British power, supporting her stand by the loyalty of the Druze tribes in southern Syria to Britain, visiting mainly the areas where they live in "Jebel Druze", and conversing exclusively with the notables of al-Atrash tribe. This

mind. Then one is reduced to the disagreeable necessity of trying even involuntarily to make the fact of oneself in a mist of half-truths and half-falsehoods which cling about one's mind do what one will to shake them off. (i)

Bell divided the Middle Eastern people into race, sects, casts and tribes. She makes references to the Druze as "noble stock", "fine steel" and "valiant hillmen". The way she describes the people implies racial physiognomic aspects which end up in deciphering their smartness and the reproductive possibilities of these tribes. She says:

They were thick-set, broad-shouldered men, with features of marked irregularity and projecting teeth ... the Sherarat, though they are one of the largest and the most powerful of the tribes and the most famous breeders of camels, are of bad blood, and no Arab of the Balka would intermarry with them ... a negro of Sukhur, a powerful man with an intelligent face, was very anxious to come with me as guide to the Druze mountains, but he admitted that as soon as he reached the territory of these valiant hillmen he would have to turn and flee, there is always feud between the Druze and Beni Sakher. The negro slaves of Sukhur are well used by their masters who know their worth, and they have a position of their own in the desert, a glory reflected from the great tribe they serve. (38)

fruits of her victory from her, as they did after with Greeks" (152) on which she did not reflect. Moreover, she was dismissive of the Arab nationalists who demanded independence from both the Ottomans and the British. They did not want to replace one colonizer with another one. Like the consul-general in Egypt, Lord Cromer, she considered those nationalists "demagogues and agitators". In other words, for her the area is rotten and falling apart culturally, politically and economically. The rescue label must be exclusively British. In other words, she wanted to deprive this society of the existence of any vital Arabic or Ottoman economic, political and cultural characteristics and values as a strategy to affirm the trope of empty land waiting to be settled and governed by the British.

However, there were moments of rupture in the discourse of oriental stereotypes of polarity and negativity. Sometimes she realized the inaccuracy of the discursive formations about the Other and at the same time she was not able to transcend them, which leaves her understanding of the region and the people partial. She wrote to her step-mother about this point saying:

One suddenly finds that one had formulated some view from which it is very difficult to back out ... because the mere fact of fitting it with words engraves it upon one's

place in terms of "physical immobility" in their ethnographies. This creates a concreteness of place and "an incarceration of the natives". Bell denied the natives of Syria travel, movement and any geographic interaction which they have it for themselves for granted, and put the natives within certain space and time boundaries. When she was conversing with some Christian natives who went frequently to the United States for the job opportunity, she could not see them as more than "half naked figures"(100) who go there to sell cheap wares and come back to the same primitive life with few dollars in their pockets. She was denying them any possibility for change. She did not think that travel may regenerate them materially and subjectively as it did with her. She wrote in her letters after her trip to Syria that "I have become a person in Syria". She is not willing to see them outside certain frame.

The recognition of the reason for change is paralleled by dehistoricizing and fixing the East. She could not see that the state of economic decadence the area was witnessing was the result of the economic and political pressures the European powers were practicing on the Ottoman empire to weaken and break it down. When she was conversing with some of the notables, one told her that "the evils under which we suffer are due to the foreign [European] nations who refuse to allow the Turkish empire to move in any direction. When she fights they take the

representational force to Bell's political observations. They contribute to her nostalgia, which provided another strategy for legitimating her views on colonization, Christianity and the Middle East. What is important here is not Bell's archaeological scholarship itself but her use of archaeology to exclude Arab history and its contemporary realities through reference to an ancient Orient. This violent epistemic process is to justify supplanting the Middle East with a potential British colonization, whether direct or indirect. That is why she went on that trip to discover and survey the land geographically, and to get acquainted with the tribes, mainly the Druze sect, who can be of help to Britain against the Ottomans. So her practice of archaeology is connected to a project of colonization.

The stability in time and space did not let Bell observe the historic movement and change in people. In his article "Putting Hierarchy in its Place", Arjun Appadurai shows in his criticism of the "native" in the anthropological discourse how the relation between the confinement of ideology and the idea of a place aims at confining the "natives", and how it is circumscribed and linked to the hegemonic context on a certain place. He refers to two points. First, the notion that culture is considered in one way or another a holistic concept, and the anthropological discourses about a certain place consider the people of this

westward, I could not hope to enlighten her, and so left her watching for some new things out of the East.” (325-6). On different occasions, she talked of the archaeologist’s appreciation of “the works of the human imagination [that] fell into the appointed place in the history of art, directing and illuminating his own understanding of it.” (176) She was speaking in general terms though she was under the spell of the Roman ruins of Ba’albak. In another place, she lamented that “the fine and simple beauty of the Romanesque was born in Syria. It is curious to consider to what developments the genius of these architects might have led if they had not been checked by the Arab Invasion.” (306) The Islamic architecture did not attract her attention or represent any value for her in comparison with the Roman and other ancient ones. It is always a recurrent motif in her narrative that her voyage is a sort of rescue of the ancient **East** from the recent decadent Arabs and Ottomans. Ella Shohat argues in “Gender and Culture of empire: Toward a Feminist Ethnography of the Cinema” that “The simplistic positing of a rupture between present and past ... [East] conveniently empowers the Western claim over ... the past [East]” (60)

The photographic images of the archeological ruins in Bell’s text show a strategic use of this representational technology to create reality effects. The referential power of photography and archaeology gave epistemic and

She reflects on the same past but in a sarcastic way in regard to Namrud's old method of selling corn in Tneib in Jordan to the Sherarat tribe saying that for her "incongruous presence and the lapse of a few thousand years they might have been the sons of Jacob come down into Egypt to bicker over the weight of the sacks with their brother Joseph." (40) She deprives the area of the existence of any economic exchange system and when she does not, she sees that system represented for thousands of years by the "ghazu" where the tribes in the desert raid against each other, capturing the flocks of the powerless tribes. She said: "The truth is that the ghazu is the only industry the desert knows, ... based on false conceptions of the laws of supply and demand.(66)

Her interest in the ancient past and the archaeological sites of the East was because it represented the European roots and source of civilization which supposedly extends to the present of the west, referring to it as the "memories of ... ancient friendship." The West, past and present, is the center of civilization for her. The ancient East was "our" past, and she treated it differently from other Eastern pasts and presents. When she saw the sculpture of the Sphinx in Antioch facing eastward, she said: it "still remembers that the Greek she knew marched up from Babylonia, and since even the Romans did not teach her that the living world lies

Semites [were considered] an instant of arrested development, and functionally speaking this came to mean that for the Orientalists no modern Smite, however much he may have believed himself to be modern, could ever outdistance the organizing claims on him of his origins. This functional rule worked on temporal and spatial levels together. No smite advanced in time beyond the development of a classical period. (234)

Bell's description of the shadowy city in the desert and its vague ruins speaks for Bell of a pre-Islamic period known as the Age of Ignorance in which poets like Imr ul Kais were against the Islamic control of their land. She connects this ancient pre-Islamic Arab past with the romance of the "Noble Oriental" and in the present with the "vanishing Bedouin". When she sets out for the journey from Jerusalem on the 5th of February 1905, she transcends the date of her trip and the place as an Ottoman province to enter into the Biblical past leaving no space for historicity and change:

The west wind swept up from the Mediterranean, hurried across the plain where the Canaanites waged war with the stubborn hill dwellers of Judea, and leapt the barrier of mountains to which the kings of Assyria and Egypt had lain vain siege. (2)

difference as distance to deny coevalness" eliminates any possibility for a dialogue, though the native and the Westerner are living in the same moment of ethnography and they are conversing as Bell states in the first lines in her preface. In Bell's narrative, this "freeze" of time is associated with the ageless place represented by the desert:

Every line of it [the desert] took on significance, every stone was like the ghost of a hearth in which the warmth of Arab life was hardly cold, though the fire might have been extinguished this hundred years. It was a city of shadowy outlines visible one under the other, fleeting and changing, combining into new shapes elements that are as old as Time, the new indistinguishable from the old and the old from the new. (60)

The changelessness in time and place was reflected on the static life east of Suez. There is no sense of motion, neither in the desert nor in the "sown" areas as if the East appears to be identified with "origin". Edward Said observes in Orientalism

In no people more than in the Oriental Semites was it possible to see the present and origin together. The Jews and the Muslims, as subjects of Orientalist study, were readily understandable in view of the primitive origin. The

At the very least, the present tense “freezes” a society at the time of observation; at worst, it contains assumptions about the repetitiveness, predictability and conservatism of primitives ... it presupposes the givenness of the object of anthropology as something to be observed. (81-82)

Using the present tense creates the effect of making the colonized country and its people an object of knowledge, denying them the status that is claimed by the traveler as representative of the colonizing powers, retaining the subject, powerful position for westerners, or what Fabian calls “denial of coevalness”. The Other is removed from his subjecthood in time and space.

Fabian stresses that the colonized were further homogenized by using the third person pronoun “he”, as Bell was always switching back and forth between the “Oriental” and “he”, as if they were reduced to one “specimen”. Fabian points out that:

Pronouns and verb forms in the third person mark an Other outside the dialogue. He (she or it) is not spoken to but posited (predicated) as that which contrasts with the personness of the participants in the dialogue. (85)

Fabian finds that what brings together these disparate grammatical features is that they are used to remove the Other from the field of humanity. This “affirmation of

colonizers, and hence denying them "coevalness". Fabian argues that "there is no knowledge of the Other which is not a temporal, historic, a political act" (1). By using terms like "primitive", "backward" and "medieval" to describe the colonized country, it was constituted in the past time of the British historical development and progress and was not allowed to exist according to its history. So the Other was not just an object of study and knowledge but a temporal category of western thought.

Fabian points out that secularization and universalization of time in the Judeo-Christian time was contemporaneous with the beginning of colonialism. Ethnography depended on "temporal devices" in constituting its relation with the Other in order to affirm "difference as distance". Ethnographers often try to naturalize and dehistoricize the Other which presents an ethnographic present in the state of timelessness. This state of timelessness carries with it a hidden evolutionism which was part of the cultural discourse at that time. It has the effect of representing an unchanging society caught in the moment of the ethnographer's representation, written through a form of the eternal present. Fabian puts it as follows:

Her opinion leaves the reader with the impression that what she is telling him is a fact about the mentality of the Oriental which according to her, has stagnant characteristics, turning the Oriental and his mentality to an object waiting her examination and guidance. We see her attempt to infantilize the Oriental though she did not give any reason to get directly to this judgment or conclusion. What is meant by the "Oriental"? it is very loose term. Is s/he anyone "east of Suez"? or does this hazy generalization include, for instance, the Chinese or the Indian? Such language of generalization is able to create cultures, to flatten out people's differences, and to be a language of power and truth for coming from a colonial subject, a position which enhances one's status as a knowing subject.

She moves immediately, though we are still in the first page of the preface, to describe the Oriental as "guided by traditions of conduct and morality that go back to the beginning of civilization...human life does not undergo a... change east of Suez" (i-ii). This brings into attention what Johannes Fabian calls timeless present. The colonized culture was differentiated from the colonizing one by being represented as existing on a different time scale to the colonizers. Fabian shows us how colonizers portray the colonized country and its people in the distant past tense, relegating them to a time which has been superseded by the

culture of the other through "homogeneity, coherence and timelessness". "Writing against culture" means writing ethnographies of the particular", including specific histories, discourses and relations, the need to explore and reveal the conditions of studying other societies, and the everyday relations and practices which help to break down "Otherness". That is what Bell claimed to do by letting the individuals she met tell their stories. However, she was not able to offer such an account of cultural relativity over evaluation and judgment, for which she criticized other travelers, that could reduce the Other as less Other, that can celebrate difference and heterogeneity because it was ruled by asymmetrical power relations and western hierarchy. In colonial context, difference always smuggle in hierarchy.

This contradiction appears immediately in the second sentence after the quotation mentioned above. She said"

The Oriental is like a very old child. He unacquainted with many branches of knowledge which we have come to regard as of elementary necessity; frequently, but not always, his mind is little preoccupied with the need of acquiring them, and he concerns himself scarcely at all with what we call practical utility. He is not practical in our acceptance of the word, any more than a child is practical.

Druze as well as the more cautious utterances of Turkish and Syrian officials.(i)

In this passage, Bell tries to create for her travel narrative a different environment from the typical ones. She did not even want to refer to it as a travel book. She wanted it to be more a book of ethnography. She was aware of the "belatedness" of travel in her era, where the exotic is no longer there, and of the abundance of other travel accounts on this area, not just by British travelers but by famous medieval Muslim ones. That is why she tried to tell the reader from the very beginning that the areas she was visiting (the archaeological sites of the northern cities of Syria and the edge of the desert) had not been sufficiently explored by previous travelers.

She emphasized that her methodology was different too. She wanted to establish the authenticity of her account by trying to eliminate her presence as much as she can to let the natives tell their stories "as far as possible", using what Liala Abu-lughod calls "writing against culture" and depending on Bedouin hospitality as a site of the "friendly and continuous intercourse" that became one of her information- gathering techniques in the Middle-East to construct a representation of herself as an authority on tribal politics. However, "writing against culture" involves the suppression of generalizations which come to create the

In 1916 she became an intelligence officer for the Arab Bureau in the Basra branch in Iraq, to become involved from that time on in an active political process with T. E. Lawrence for the creation of the Arab revolution to end the Ottoman occupation to be replaced by the British one, establishing the first Arabic state, Iraq, under the British mandate. Though this date represented her official start of her political activity, she was involved much earlier. It is true that her journey in Syria was to feed her love and enthusiasm for the Orient and for archaeology, but it included a lot of politics and spying and promoted western views of the necessity of the "civilizing mission". Bell started her narrative by a preface where she introduced her methodology saying:

I desired to write not so much a book of travel as an account of the people whom I met or who accompanied me on my way, and to show what the world is like in which they live and how it appears to them. And since it was better that they should, as far as possible tell their own tale, I have strung their words upon the thread of the road, relating as I have heard them the stories with which shepherd and man-at-arms beguiled the hours of the march, the talk that passed from lip to lip round the camp fire, in the black tent of the Arab and the quest chamber of the

realized that they were no longer ruled by the Muslim Ottomans but by the secular national Turks who started to impose their language and culture, high taxes, administrative corruption. Egypt witnessed a national anti-European upheaval suppressed by the British and led them to colonize it. (Khalidi, 130-1) During this period Bell visited Persia, Iraq, Syria and the Arabian Peninsula many times, starting from 1892 to 1916. From 1916 on she lived in the area until her death in 1926. She was an Orientalist and a politician. She had studied history at Oxford. Her interest in the East made her learn Arabic and Persian.

For Bell, as generally for the women and men of her class, the superiority of the British nation was due to the rise of the bourgeoisie as its governing authority during the nineteenth century. She came from a wealthy and influential industrial family who owned the iron and coal industry in England, and made a large contribution to the British empire. It created one of its greatest fortunes, embodying its political outlook. The family was involved in politics since the days of her grandfather. She mingled with diplomats, viceroys, and senior government officials since her early adulthood. She was aware that the respect she got from people in her trip to Syria was due to her family's political and influential connections. That is why politics was part and parcel of her life.

institutions. That is why she represented them in the infant stage of the human mental development if it happens that she acknowledges their existence. Bell's Orientalism and her gendered and racial subjectivity were formed and informed her knowledge of the British governing of the colonies.

In 1905, the year Gertrude Bell set off for her journey to geographic Syria, the Ottoman rule was in its final phase after a long period of hegemonic control over the area started from 1326. The European political and economic intervention in the middle East became considerable by the end of the nineteenth century. Some of the marginalized ethnic and religious groups in this area started to look to foreign powers for alliance, support and protection. The Maronite (catholic Lebanese) were under the French protection. The Druze looked to the British for support. This support started in 1860. This explains the warmth of hospitality Bell received from them during her trip in the area. England needed the region under its control to guarantee a free access to India without any interference from Germany, the ally of the Ottoman empire, or France to protect its oil concessions. All it needed was to establish relations with the opposition to the Ottomans instead of coming into direct confrontation with the empire. The upheaval came from other groups, the nationalists, who

discussed politics with the native men and carried messages between the native notables and the male colonial officers. Others dined with men when native women were not allowed, and visited places like the harem from which men were excluded. They contributed to revealing the secrets of certain places in the colonies. As representative of colonial power, they had higher rank in the colony than in Britain. They adopted social roles and attitudes they might have not adopted at home due to their racial and gender superiority in comparison with natives. They often defined themselves as "national" subjects. Their individuality was supported by their "Britishness", though the concept of British citizen was gendered at home. This led into overlap in spaces having at the same time double and contradictory spaces of the Other and the Self within.

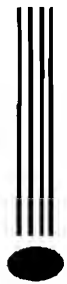
In this article I will examine the British woman traveler Gertrude Bell by analyzing her travel narrative SYRIA THE DESERT AND THE SOWN and the influence of this geographic space on the construction of her subjective space as a colonial subject, how ethnographically she represented the Syrian society and what was her main concern, and the influence of the ideology of Orientalism on her understanding and representation of the Syrians, especially that she came with the impression of didactic colonization, so that the Syrians are in need of education in the superiority of the British political and economic

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In WESTERN WOMEN AND IMPERIALISM, Chaudhuri and Strobel have argued that "The study of Western women in colonial settings is but the most recent construction of now fast- changing imperial history, one that rejects the notion of empire as male space ... or even of imperial history as solely constituted by what policymakers in London or in other western capitals attempted to achieve" (4) British women contributed a lot to building the British empire. It was a material as well as subjective gain. The post-colonial feminist research destabilized concepts taken for granted about the public and private spheres in Victorian England. Travel, enabled middle-class women to abandon many social conventions enforced on them in Britain.

The colonial context gave women power and they participated in the power relations through the roles they played within the colonial societies. They traveled like honorary men and their nationality protected them. They entered places into which women were not allowed. Some

I will examine her cultural translation of the Syrian society in her travel narrative, SYRIA: THE DESERT AND THE SOWN. I will analyze her "representation" in the light of recent theories about the concept of "culture", "time", "place" and "space". These theories deconstruct the totalizing trend we find in the colonial discourse which is built on power relations between the colonizer and the colonized. This representation becomes as Michele Foucault says "network of often colliding forces". In spite of that, these texts create what Homi Bhabha calls the "Third Space" for the colonized in history, which now postcolonial studies deconstruct by proving the role of politicized knowledge and hegemony in its construction. This third space was created not only for the colonized but also for the European women in the colonies who acquired power for belonging to any western European nationality, a power she would have never dreamt of if she had remained in her domestic atmosphere in Europe.



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ABSTRACT

In this research, I will examine the travel narrative of one of the British women travelers to the East in the beginning of the twentieth century, 1905. Her name is Gertrude Bell. She visited Syria, Mesopotamia and the Arabian peninsula and wrote travel accounts about them. Later, she came back to the area and settled in Mesopotamia where she played a very important political role in the British policy and in establishing Iraq as the first Arabic state. Her travel accounts were very helpful in supporting the British plans in this area.

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